

Emergency Hotel Voucher Program

Program Proposal Instructions

2019 – 2021 Grant Term

Section 1: Proposal Background

Introduction

The City of Wenatchee is seeking proposals for the operation of emergency hotel voucher programs in Chelan and Douglas counties. Approximately \$47,494 is available for program staffing and for the purchase of hotel vouchers for a two-year grant period beginning on July 1, 2019.

Program Description

Emergency shelters are facilities that provide safe, temporary shelter for the homeless population in general or for specific segments of the homeless population (i.e. men, women, families, individuals fleeing domestic violence). However, not all communities have the resources to operate a shelter within their communities. In addition, some households are not able to enter communal shelters for a variety of reasons. In these circumstances, hotel vouchers can fill a void and provide an alternative form of short-term shelter. In addition to providing hotel vouchers, these programs also provide case management services targeted to helping clients transition to permanent housing as quickly as possible.

Section 2: Program Components

Target Client Population

Eligible clients must:

- Be homeless (i.e. unsheltered or fleeing domestic violence)
- Have completed a coordinated entry intake/assessment through the Community Housing Network and through that process:
 - Have been determined to have barriers that prohibit them from staying safely in communal shelters such as:
 - Medical issues (physical, mental, or developmental) that make communal living challenging or unsafe.
 - ADA access issues for households with members with mobility challenges.
 - Criminal history of violence or sex offenses that prohibit them from staying in communal shelters.
 - Families with children who are unable to access other shelters.
 - Households in outlying areas without shelter services

Hotel vouchers are a costly homeless intervention, so they should be used only as a last resort when all shelters have been filled to capacity or there is a verified extenuating circumstance that prevents a person from staying in a shelter.

It is anticipated that approximately 40 – 50 households per year will require hotel voucher services. In order to meet the client demand, these services may be provided by multiple service providers in Chelan and Douglas counties. However, if multiple providers are selected, it is expected that these providers will form partnerships in order to maximize service effectiveness and avoid duplication of services.

Program Elements

The proposed program will meet the following criteria which are based on best evidence-based practices for emergency hotel voucher programs:

- The program's primary focus is to assist clients to move to permanent housing as quickly as possible. Providers will facilitate and support progress and activities that support housing and housing stability for clients. Services are client-centered and organized to quickly route clients into housing or other long-term placement through supportive services, case management, and housing placement services.
- Adheres to Housing First principles:
 - Access to a program is not contingent on sobriety, minimum income requirements, lack of a criminal record, completion of treatment, participation in services, or other unnecessary conditions.
 - Support services are available but are voluntary, client-driven, individualized, and flexible.
 - Services are informed by a harm-reduction philosophy that recognizes that drug and alcohol use are a part of some clients' lives. Clients are engaged in non-judgmental communication regarding drug and alcohol use and are offered support regarding how to avoid risky behaviors and engage in safer practices.

Scope of Work

The description outlined above in the *Program Elements* section identifies the key program elements and services the selected applicant should provide. Applicants should consider this description when developing their proposals. However, applicants may suggest modifications and/or additions that will in their estimation make the program more feasible or effective. In addition, applicants should indicate if they will be able to offer all the required program components to the estimated total number of clients listed above. If not, applicants should describe what level of service they will be able to provide while also maintaining the highest level of program quality.

Partnerships and Collaborations

The establishment of community collaborations and partnerships (both formal and informal) are a critical and required component of the program. Applicants are encouraged to plan creatively to utilize existing community resources to provide program services. Applicants must be able to demonstrate partnerships with existing services, both internal to their own organization and within the broader community to best maximize the use of existing resources, avoid duplication of services, and expand options for those served.

Performance Metrics

The selected applicant will develop a program evaluation plan that, at a minimum, includes the following performance targets:

- At least 50% of program participants will exit to permanent housing.

Additional performance targets and metrics may be used.

Funding & Eligible Activities

Approximately \$47,494 is available for the operation of emergency hotel voucher programs for a two-year grant period beginning on July 1, 2019. The funding may be allocated between the following categories: Hotel voucher payments, program operations, and administration. For a complete description of these eligible categories, please refer to Page 3 of the *Homeless Grant Proposal Guidelines*.

Preferred Qualifications

Successful applicants will preferably demonstrate experience/knowledge of the following areas:

1. Providing services to homeless households in an emergency shelter setting with an emphasis on reducing barriers to securing and retaining permanent housing.
2. Providing housing and case management services to the target population.
3. Demonstrated capacity to serve individuals with medical conditions, developmental/physical disabilities, behavioral health issues, or substance abuse issues and to make referrals to a diverse team of medical professionals in the community.
4. Demonstrated partnerships with providers of mainstream resources, services, and benefits.
5. Accounting for public/grant funds and complying with federal, state, and local funding requirements.
6. Familiarity with the Washington State Homeless Management Information System (HMIS).
7. Familiarity with the Chelan-Douglas Community Housing Network coordinated entry system.

Program Staffing

- Applicants should propose a staffing structure/level that best meets the requirements of the proposal. However, it should include some type of 24/7 support or oversight to best serve this vulnerable population.
- All program staff should be trained in Housing First principles. Program case managers should be trained in and actively employ evidence-based practices for client engagement such as trauma-informed care and motivational interviewing.

Section 3: Proposal Questions

Please provide a proposal narrative in response to the questions contained in this section. All questions must be answered for a proposal to be considered complete. Incomplete proposals will not be considered.

Proposal narratives must be organized and formatted as follows:

- Please respond to the questions in this section from a **program-level perspective** (as opposed to an agency-wide perspective).
- **Responses to questions must be organized in the same order as the questions are listed below. Please use each question below as a header within your narrative and provide your responses in a paragraph format below each header.**
- Responses should be concise and specific and should be limited to the questions listed below.
- The proposal narrative and attachments should be submitted on 8 ½" X 11" **single-sided** paper and should be paper clipped (not stapled or bound).
- The proposal narrative should be limited to a maximum of ten (10) pages single-sided in no smaller than 12-point font. The ten page maximum does not include the agency application form or any of the required attachments listed in the Proposal Guidelines document.

Proposal Questions

Project Overview and Target Population:

1. Program name
2. Total funds requested
3. Type of program (i.e. hotel voucher program)
4. Provide a general description of your program, a description of the target population, and time limits on services (if any).
5. Describe how many people will be served each year.
6. What special populations, if any, is your program designed to serve?
7. What is the location and service range of your program?
8. Support services:
 - a. What supportive services are offered and how frequently are they offered?
 - b. How does your program support participants in the goal of transitioning to permanent housing?

- c. Describe how clients will meet their hygiene, laundry, and nutritional needs while participating in the program.
9. Do you currently have agreements in place with local hotel owners to rent rooms to your clients? If yes, describe the business relationship including how it is structured and how long it has been in place. If no, describe how you plan to recruit hotel owners to participate.
10. When working with hotel owners, what concerns do they raise about participating in a voucher program? How do you work with owners to address these concerns?

Commitment to Housing First & Low-Barrier Principles:

Note: In addition, to the questions below, please complete a *Housing First & Low-Barrier Assessment Checklist* form and include it as an attachment to your narrative.

1. What criteria must participants meet before receiving services?
2. What would cause your agency to deny someone entry into this program?
3. What project rules do participants have to follow and what happens if a participant does not follow the rules?
4. If someone is asked to leave the program, what steps does your program take to make sure they don't exit to homelessness? Can a household who has been asked to leave your program return at another time?
5. How does your agency ensure that services are voluntary while keeping participants engaged to promote housing stability?

Program Staffing & Commitment to Housing-Focused Services:

1. Describe the staffing structure for the program:
 - a. List each program staff position including job title and FTE status.
 - b. Does your program utilize resident staffing (i.e. clients who perform staff duties in exchange for room/board) or volunteer staffing? If so, indicate the number of residents or volunteers employed, the total number of resident or volunteer hours served per year, and describe your agency's policy for managing these staff members.
2. What is the ratio of direct-service staff to participants and how does that ratio support program outcomes?
3. What responsibilities and/or tasks do program staff have when partnering with participants on resolving their housing crisis quickly and in a participant-centered way?

4. What qualifications are most important to your agency when hiring direct service staff?
How do these qualifications prepare staff to serve your program's participants?

Program Partnerships:

1. Identify and describe partnerships or collaborations that would be leveraged to support the program. Identify the partner organizations and describe the specific services they would provide. Outline if you already have formal partnerships in place, or if not, describe how you would approach building and maintaining partnerships. If applicable, include copies of partnerships agreements, letters of intent to partner, or memorandums of understanding.

Program Performance Evaluation:

1. Describe how you plan to collect and track evaluation performance outcomes.
2. How does your program ask for and incorporate participant feedback about services into your program design and policies/procedures? Please provide specific examples.

Budgeting:

Note: In addition, to the questions below, please complete a *Proposed Program Budget* form and include it as an attachment to your narrative.

1. Describe how the program will be sustained long-term. How will you support the program after grant funds are expended or if your agency is not awarded funding?